

PAK-US RELATIONS:
FRIENDSHIP AND INTERESTS

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US under secretary of state Thomas Pickering is scheduled to visit Pakistan shortly. This would be second high-level official contact after President Bill Clinton's visit to the country. Earlier, Pakistani officials and government representatives made a beeline to the US. Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz, interior minister Moin Haider and advisor to the Chief Executive Javed Jabbar as well as ISI chief, all have been to the US recently. These visits suggest that something 'curious' is going on and their taking place in the wake of Clinton's visit makes them more meaningful. It is imperative that we analyze these developments, the message of US President's visit, and what the future holds for us both in case we take the line given from outside or chart a strategy on our own that we consider best suits the interest of the nation.

Significance of Clinton's Visit:

President Clinton's visit to India and Pakistan is of great significance in highlighting the outlines of the US role in the future not only in the sub-continent but also in the politics of whole Asia. It would not be wrong to say that this visit is indicative of basic changes in the half-a-century-old US policy for the region. This is an open challenge for Pakistani nation and its leadership.

There is no way for us but to examine with all honesty, objectivity and loyalty with the country and the nation our relations with the US - the past episode, the present stage and the future prospects. We should come out of the world of dreams and wishes and in the light of the new situation, keeping in view the ground realities, draw a vibrant, clear and sustainable strategy for the protection of our interests and achievement of our ideological, political, economic and civilizational objectives and ideals. The real message of the visit, if any, is that it is time we understood the reality of friendship and affinity of the "friendliest of the friends" and the "most allied ally" and then determine our policy and objectives without any delay. Delaying and dawdling is fatal. Fresh resolve and clear policy befitting a dignified nation that knows well the value of independence is the need of the hour.

The task lying ahead can neither be accomplished by an individual nor can it be left to so-called intellectuals, civil servants, generals or representatives of NGOs. The decision is to be taken by the nation, after open discussion and with consensus and rising above expedient considerations. It is the duty of the incumbent military government to take the nation into confidence and reconstruct anew a foreign policy that is truly reflective of its historical aspirations, sentiments and national security and that is based on real national solidarity and consensus.

While the central issue is about relations with the US, discussion on relations with India and other world powers is also inevitable. And as this is to be done in the backdrop of the global political map that is being shaped these days, it is necessary to think anew all the aspects of the foreign policy.

The issue is not of ad-hoc or cosmetic measures, it is about policy formulation by keeping in view the long-term requirements. This cannot be done in closed-doors. Any course taken in indifference to the wishes of the people is a recipe for disaster. In this respect, it is to be noted that:

- The foremost need is to examine Pak-US relation with complete objectivity and to formulate a clear and sustainable policy with respect to national aspirations and requirements of independence. Escaping the challenge presents no solution. What is needed is to face the challenge, boldly and squarely. This requires the ability to recognize ground realities, maturity and to see the long-term imperatives.
- Nation be taken into confidence and policy is formulated with its participation. Merely the foreign office or the chief executive's secretariat cannot do this. Only that decision can stand the test of time that is based on national thinking and backed by collective conscience. This is the essence of Islam and democracy.

The Shadowy Past:

The era of our relations with America began in 1950 with the Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan's US visit, and ended with President Clinton's visit to India in March 2000. For the first four years (1950-54), America tried that Pakistan, India and Afghanistan adopt the same policy, and that all the three side with America in the post second world war politics. Exceedingly it wished and tried to have India stand by its side and help it erecting a siege around the Socialist world. But Pundit Nehru never showed interest in becoming a part of this system and tried instead to strengthen the non-aligned movement. This was contrary to the US policy. Pakistan, according to its own strategy, considered itself as belonging more to the Central Asia and Middle East than to the South Asia and perceived a role for itself among these very countries. In such circumstances, Pakistan became member of the US' Defense pacts like Seato, Cento and Baghdad Pact and America's closest ally during the cold war.

American democracy saw no wrong in General Ayub's military dictatorship and the two developed great affinity. General Ayub addressed the American Congress and eternal bonds of friendship were pledged. But, America turned to India in the very first trial in 1962, armed two divisions of Indian army tooth and nail for so-called combat with China, gave it sophisticated warfare technology and nuclear technology, and prevented Pakistan by coercion from taking any step in Kashmir and thus we lost a historic opportunity. Then, when India attacked Pakistan in 1965, emboldened by American military and economic aid of three years, then instead of helping its ally America cut-off the military supply to Pakistan in the name of 'even-handedness', though Pakistan almost completely relied on American arms whereas India's main supplies came from Russia.

Friendship with General Yahya too was developed but the Pakistan that had facilitated Kissinger's and Nixon's access to China was deserted once again during critical times in 1971 when India openly

supported terrorism and finally invaded East Pakistan militarily in November 1971. The official documents that have been published now have notes of the US secretary of state that were written to the US President on both occasions and wherein it has been clearly stated that though US had friendship and agreements with Pakistan, American interests dictate that it should give preference to India over Pakistan.

The US opposition was at its rudest with respect to our nuclear policy. In spite of all favors that Pakistan had done to America in establishing contacts with China, exposing itself to great risks, Henry Kissinger, the US secretary of State, warned to make a "horrible example" of Pakistan. Then, President Carter felt no hesitation in severing relations and imposing economic sanctions. It was Russian invasion of Afghanistan that later compelled America to seek friendship with Pakistan. But, as soon as there appeared signs of Russian military return from Afghanistan, both Afghanistan and Pakistan were deserted once again.

Throughout the period, American relations, not only with us but also with all countries of the Third World and Muslim world, based purely on American interests. Though there was great clamor about free world, democratic rights and basic liberties besides the rhetoric of ideological and moral principles and universal values, yet, in fact, US policy's single central principle has been the interest of the US as a global power. Its friendship is highly unreliable. Changing sides is a usual norm. This is not just our experience, highly positioned American policy-makers have admitted with Machiavellian temerity that this is their real policy and if others do not understand this, it is their fault rather than American duality.

US' Expediency:

In none of the accords America and Pakistan have entered into with each other, the US honored its commitments. Many US presidents and secretaries of state and defense held out verbal assurances of help but these were never considered binding. Addressing the joint session of the American Congress on July 12, 1961, General Ayub had said:

"The only people who will stand by you are the people of Pakistan provided you are prepared to stand by them."

President Kennedy thus responded:

"Pakistan was a friend of immediacy and constancy. Americans in private and in their public life appreciate the value of friendship and the constancy of friends."

This was exposed in 1962. Then US secretary of State Dean Rusk astounded not only Pakistan but the entire world by expounding that:

"The commitments do not bind us to any particular course of action. Most of them state that in the event of aggression we would act to meet the common danger in accordance with our constitutional process. How we act in fulfillment of these processes will depend upon the facts of the situation. Some situations require less participation on our part than others."

When Senator Semington compelled the State Department in 1966 for explanation of 'commitment', a senior official came up with this Machiavellian principle:

"The President could make a statement on day and disavow it, if he chooses, the following day. No commitment devolved on the United States because of statement made by the President."

The story of 50 years of Pak-US relations is replete with such betrayals and is a living proves of the principle that was expounded by the founder of American democracy George Washington in his farewell address:

"An attachment of a small or weak towards a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter. It is a folly on the part of a nation to look of disinterested favors from another... It must pay with portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character."

The Outcome:

One of the results of American friendship came in the shape of dependence in political, economic and even military fields. In global politics, we subordinated, to a great extent, our friendships and enmities to America's global objectives and could not evolve a foreign policy that befits a really independent nation. We got deeper and deeper in the trap of foreign aid and loans and the situation has gone only from bad to worse. This situation has taken us to a point where our independence is endangered by loans and our entire economy is being used to fulfill the desires of the foreign lenders instead of responding to the real needs of the country and priorities of the nation. We depend heavily on America with respect to military equipment and war machinery and capability. As it is not bound by its own promises and can cut-off supplies whenever its expedient considerations dictate so, our defense capability is decreasing continuously. This friendship has cost us dearly in all fields.

To put all the blame on American self-serving dual policy would, however, be oversimplification and unjustified. It did what it deemed fit for its own interests, but our leaderships, army and civil and self-serving politicians failed to evolve policies suited to national interests and thus are responsible for our plight. In this respect, we should be thankful to Clinton that he, though with haughtiness and arrogance, has awakened us from slumber and gave a shake to our conscience. It has provided Pakistan's leadership to assess the situation anew, move out of dependence on America or other

foreign powers and chart out a policy befitting a truly independent nation. This task has to be undertaken immediately. Any slackness, either by delay or by looking towards others for help, would prove gravely dangerous. It is hoped that country's leadership would rise to the occasion and give the nation a respectable place in the comity of nations.

Shift in US Policy:

US President Bill Clinton's recent visit to India and Pakistan made it abundantly clear that whatever was the state of affairs of Pak-US relations, Pakistan is no more a natural ally of America. Now India is its "natural ally" and "strategic partner". And, here, it does not matter that a party that propagates Hindu Chauvinism, preaches Hindutva instead of secularism, sheds blood of Muslims, Christians and other minority groups and is bent upon their civilizational murder is in power in India. This is the situation on the ground. We should, therefore, try to understand new American priorities and ways open to us. To complain about betrayals or to dream about the revival of friendship would be against the rightful approach of facing the reality.

Fault lies with us if we failed to realize that there has always been a soft corner for India in different American governments. Keeping in view its geographical location, area, population, financial resources, strength of market and its political influence, this cannot be regarded unnatural. However, the way Indian leadership, right from the days of Nehru, presented itself as the champion of socialist system, enjoying strong ties with Russia and an active member of non-aligned movement, kept it at a distance from America during the days of the cold war. Situation changed after end of cold war. India gave up the socialist system (in whatever shape it was then) and shifted to market economy and also adopted a liberal trade policy. Despite its backing of Russia on certain issues, such as Afghanistan, it gradually started establishing relations with America. By 1995 these links had assumed a definite shape and included economic cooperation, ever-increasing trade, higher American investment, agreement in political matters, refueling facility to American planes during war against Iraq, and ultimately the commencement of joint US-India military exercises under a regular agreement concluded with American defense secretary in January 1995.

The role of Indian businessmen, industrialists and particularly of information technology institutions in America has been another important factor during this period. Indian software earned a position in American market and shot up from \$ 45 million in 1991 to \$ 5 billion in 1999. As many as 125,000 Indian software engineers are now working in the Silicon Valley of America. Indian exports to America were more than \$ 10 billion last year that is 22 percent of India's total export. Similarly, about 9 percent of its imports are from America. Trade balance is in India's favor (about \$ 6 billion surplus); hence the importance of Indian markets for American products.

There are some lessons we can learn from India. It did not rely only on its foreign office and its embassies in Washington and New York but spread a network of pro-Indian organizations. More

than 125 American Congressmen are part of the Indian lobby and voters of Indian origin are effectively using money and their political influence.

India has done its homework with prudence, skill and dexterity. The ten meetings of Jaswant Singh with Talbot have influenced the thinking of American policy makers. Jaswant Singh's book *Defending India*, published in 1998, severely criticizes the non-aligned movement and reckons the 40 years of this policy as lost years. Now foundation has been laid not only for friendship with America but also for formal and institutional relations. Its result can be seen in the 'document of vision' that establishes the same relationship between America and India as India had with Russia in 1970 prior to India's attack on East Pakistan.

On the eve of Clinton's visit, Foreign Secretary Madeleine Albright gave a very important statement that they apologize to India for neglecting them during the last 50 years. Karl Inderfurth said in clear terms:

"Overall relations with India will not be hostage to our relations with any other country".

American Connivance:

On behalf of a Task Force, headed by Dr Richard N. Haass, Vice President of the famous Brookings Institute and director of its Foreign Policy Studies, twenty one top intellectuals of America, prepared a report where Clinton was advised to give central role to India after the end of cold war and not to allow Pak-India conflict and nuclear issues to stand in way of this new setting, that Kashmir be put on back-burner and the threats of terrorism and Islamic extremism should be accorded importance. This Task Force had also suggested that Pakistani people should be directly addressed through TV and radio.

President Clinton's entourage included a large number of American traders, industrialists, investors and Indian-origin professionals. The target of all this was to bind India and America in a new alliance and to evolve a system of dialogue and cooperation for future collaboration and decision making. For this to achieve it was but essential to ignore Pakistan as well as the issues that are important for it. Kashmir issue, about which President Clinton had expressed his concern during his first address to the General Assembly, promised 'personal interest' in the declaration of July 4, 1999, and reportedly resolved to find out a solution to it before the expiry of his term, was treated as a mere bilateral and bye-issue. The central issue now is terrorism and that too as the product of Pakistan's intrusion.

Clinton and his team chose to forget the violations of human rights in Kashmir which had been repeatedly mentioned in their own speeches, letters and in the reports of State Department and the Human Rights Watch. At the time of cease-fire in Kashmir the number of Indian army there was only 12,000 and that too was promised to be reduced. Today it is more than 700,000 amounting to

half of the total Indian army strength. During the last 10 years 70,000 Kashmiri youth, old and children have been martyred. However, this state terrorism finds no mention in the statements of this second and current phase.

Indian democracy is being praised but no exception is taken to the tyranny hell let loose on minorities in India. As many as seventeen separatist movements are operating in India today but what Mr. Clinton could find was ethnic, linguistic and religious tolerance and harmony throughout the country. Quietly and deftly, he has paved way for change in the nuclear policy itself. India has receded from its earlier stand of cleansing the world of nuclear weapons, to 'non-proliferation' while America has indirectly recognized the security risks of India which has been blessed with leadership of not only this region but at the world level as well. According to the 'document of vision':

In the new century India and United States will be partners in peace, with common interest in and complimentary responsibility for ensuing regional and international security. We will engage in regular consultations on and work together for, strategic stability in Asia and beyond. We will bolster joint efforts to counter terrorism and meet other challenges to regional peace.

And on return from tour Madam Albright writes in an article that has been published in American papers on April 4:

Democratic institutions are vibrant in India, growing in Bangladesh and threatened in Pakistan... The fundamental goal of President Clinton's visit to India was to set our course for qualifying and better relationship with India, not a simple return to the status quo before its nuclear tests.

Commenting on the India-US unison as a result of this tour and its implications for Pakistan, The Economist writes:

"During Mr. Clinton's six-day visit to South Asia, most of it spent in India, the United States came closer than ever before to endorsing India's view of the region's main conflict. Mr. Clinton said pretty clearly that India cannot be expected to negotiate with Pakistan until violence in Kashmir subsided. He came close to recognizing that since India will never surrender its position of Kashmir, the line of control ought to become the permanent border, a solution that most Indians but so far few Pakistanis would accept. Some pundits claimed that the American 'shift' would embolden India to take revenge for last spring's Pakistani intrusion into Indian-controlled Kashmir."

(The Economist, April 1, 2000)

Pakistan's Response to the Challenge:

If Pakistan's leadership ignores these major changes and does not prepare effective strategy to face the new situation, then it would amount to national suicide instead of life and development. President Clinton has spared no effort in informing us on American priorities, concerns, interests and plans.

The most important question now is as to what should be Pakistan's approach in such circumstances and how it could face the situation. Of distress, sorrow, repentance, or anger none provides the remedy. A section talks of elasticity and in the name of realistic approach counsels for treading the path marked by America, albeit with certain reservations and some window-dressing. In its support it refers to unfavorable circumstances, battered economy and the world situation. Their advice is for signing the CTBT, mitigation in Jihad in Kashmir, control over religious academies and severing relations with Afghanistan. Track II diplomacy is also advocated. This noise and whisper is restricted to a small section of the people whereas the majority anxiously awaits a completely new initiative.

Time has reached that without indulging in anti-American emotionalism the nation conveyed to America with solemn determination and due respect that the doors are open for friendship and cooperation but there is no room for subjugation and allegiance. America enjoys the right to adopt policy that serves its interests better, but Pakistan and its people too have the right to decide about their stand keeping in view own freedom, security and national interests.

In fact, Pakistan today is confronted with the same circumstances as the Muslims of the sub-continent were faced with during the British rule 60 years ago. The British government, the Indian National Congress and the Hindu majority wanted, in the name of democracy, world opinion, and the powers of that time, to ignore the ideological and political identity of Muslims and to put them in the grip of such a political system where there was nothing for them except subjugation and deprivation. Congress declared that there were only two forces in India: the British and the Congress; and that only they had the right to decide about the future. Quaid-i-Azam and the Muslims challenged this and asserted that there was a third power of Muslims as well who have their own identity; and that no plan for future can be made without their participation and approval. The British and Hindus both hoped this would prove a cry in wilderness, as the Muslims were politically and economically weak. But the resolve and sacrifices of Muslims, Quaid's lofty and mature leadership, the popularity of Pakistan's ideology and its capturing force changed the situation within seven years and whatever had seemed impossible became a living reality.

We are faced with the same situation today. During the half century the cultural progeny of the British that has been in power diluted the achievements of Pakistan Movement. Quaid's Pakistan was bisected and the nation that had won freedom from the grip of the British and Hindus, has been pushed into the lap of America. The situation has worsened to the extent that today President

Clinton has the audacity to suggest a peaceful life and economic development under the domination of India.

Those who suggest behaving like a weathercock are in fact pushing us to slavery and subjugation. We still hold good opinion about them that it is perhaps unconsciously that they see some signs of life in 'escape from reality'. But, to us, there is only one way to respect and progress: not to compromise and not to allow so-called flexibility in respect of our real destination, objective of existence, freedom and ideological identity. Realizing the bitter facts of life, we should gear up for struggle, diligent work, prepared to offer sacrifice and to mobilize for achieving the desired end.

We should give up buckling under pressure. In this respect, too, we find the best example in the Holy Prophet (pbuh) when his revered uncle, being under pressure from Quraish, suggested some compromise and latitude, he (pbuh) openly refused saying 'I shall not stop inviting people towards the right path even if they place the sun on my right hand and the moon on the left till the time of my mission meets success or I (pbuh) perish in it.

Quaid-i-Azam exuded this determination and provided guidance and finally achieved freedom for the nation after a great struggle:

An honorable agreement can be reached between parties enjoying equal status. Until both learn to respect and have fear of each other, there can be no strong foundation for any agreement.

The weaker's offering peace means admission of weakness and invites aggression. (In such circumstances) appeals for loyalty, honesty and well-wishing carry no weight. **(Speech in October 1937, Speeches and Writings, vol. I, p.32)**

There cannot be two views about the soundness, genuineness, and benefits of this strategy. There are, however, some requisites for practically enforcing it and without which it cannot be effective. This needs self-confidence, firm belief in Allah and trust in the nation; instead of looking towards others and asking them for help.

With internal solidarity, rising above internecine conflicts, temporary consideration and group interests, it is imperative to mobilize the entire nation for the achievement of self-reliance and an economic and military force that can strike awe in the ranks of enemy. Safeguarding nuclear capability and its development are one aspect of this task. Along with it the nation has to prove its mettle in fields of social and milli solidarity, thought-giving leadership, and education and research. Struggle for the establishment of a just order and judicious distribution of resources presents the most effective way to achieve this end. Revival of the institution of democracy and coming to power of a well-trusted leadership is a must to make this exercise fruitful and lasting.

Though the performance of military leadership and its civilian team has so far been highly unsatisfactory, yet Clinton's recent visit and the new direction of the American politics have provided a historic opportunity that should be availed of without any further loss of time. This is the call of the time and answer to the challenge.

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